

The Coming Day.

SEPTEMBER, 1899.

NOTES OF A HARVEST FESTIVAL DISCOURSE.

SPOKEN AT CROYDON.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.—Psalm lxvii., 1, 2, 5, 6.

HARVEST Festivals, like votes of thanks, are apt to become insincere, because indiscriminating. Honest votes of thanks would often be unpleasant; and honest harvest festivals might sometimes be shocking. This year, farmers, on the whole, are happy, but, a few seasons ago, the following startling paragraph appeared in an agricultural paper:

‘A Perplexed Essex Vicar’ has been appealing to his fellow clerics for advice as to the propriety of holding harvest festivals in the churches this year. In his district the harvest has been absolutely ruinous. ‘What am I to do?’ he asks in despair. ‘It seems almost a bitter mockery to ask them to return thanks for a benefit which they have not enjoyed and cannot now receive.’

That is frank and businesslike, but somehow it does not look comfortable: and yet how honest it is! But it is difficult to be a conventional Christian—or, let us say, a conventional churchman—and, at the same time, honest all along.

Then, moreover, arises the old question of the wise man who asked why they should say grace over a good dinner and ask no blessing over a good book. And, to tell the truth, there is something animal about that. The mere animal puts food first. The angel probably puts high thinking first.

Poor man, standing about half way between them, shews too plainly, saying grace only over food, that he is nearer to the animal than to the angel.

And yet, after all, there are strong reasons in favour of celebrating summer and harvest with thanksgiving and songs of joy. There is no wonder known to us like this annual wonder of the summer sun; and even apart from belief in God, the natural frame of mind is akin to music and dance and praise. There is true religion in it, too, for the sun and its effects do seem to bring us very near to the mighty source of all. It is not to be at all wondered at that sun-worship has, at all times, so largely won the homage of the world; for the sun gives not only light but life. There is a curious speculation that the sun is a mighty centre of myriads of spiritual beings who send down the life forces upon which the worlds of the Solar system depend. It is a curious idea, and it may not be altogether alien to the truth.

In whatever sense there is a God, He is the sun's creative light,—truly like a God's 'face' shining in upon us; for the one supreme glory and mystery of summer is the stirring of life in every atom of earth within reach of the sun. It is a veritable drawing of earth towards heaven. The trees put forth branches and leaves like arms and hands: and they really are arms and hands, and clasp and appropriate the treasures of the sunny air. Some flowers follow the sun, like sentient creatures, as if to drink from the overflowing cup upon which all living things depend: and, in their way, they seem to say to God, 'Lift up the light of Thy face upon us.' It is all immensely like the presence of a God: and so like it that thanksgiving is the most natural thing imaginable. And, truly, if we reflect upon it, there always is reason for thankfulness if we take the world as a whole; and that is evidently how God wants us to take it.

'We have nothing to be thankful for, parson,' said these Essex farmers; but if they thought wisely about it they would drop these little isolations—this idea of Essex thinking of itself only—and think rather of the whole earth and the wonderful forces and products of the whole earth. Then they might have reasons for thankfulness.

People too often talk of the thing that is going to the bad and forget the thing that is going to the good. When the price of corn is low, no doubt that is bad for the farmer, but it means cheap bread for the people of London and Liverpool.

But this natural attitude of the grateful heart needs watching; for, even in joy and thankfulness, one needs to be rational, and never more so than when we speak of God. The writer of this old Hebrew poem doubtless had the old-world belief in a God who, like some supreme Lady Bountiful, came forth and showered His mercies when He was pleased,—or withheld them, or turned them to curses when He was displeased. He literally meant, ‘Cause Thy face to shine upon us; for then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.’ But we have eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and we know that God does not act as the old Hebrew thought, and as many Christians think. The dear wise Father deals with us through strong unswerving laws,—and for our good. For us, the smiling face is the beneficent law, and the blessing is the beautiful result. And, when the working of the law does not appear to be beneficent, or the result does not seem beautiful, the wise will not pray for change, however little they may be inclined to sing.

We can make no terms with the old superstition that God, arbitrarily and of set purpose, sends forth His judgment. He is not ‘favourable to us’ when the hay harvest is good, and ‘dealing with us in judgment’ when the rain rots the corn.

Diseases are Thy servants, Lord,
They come at Thy command,

said the old hymn-writer. But this is not true, except in a decidedly impersonal sense.

But perhaps the mercy of God is best shewn in life’s uncertainties, after all. What an insipid thing life would be without variety and the need of enterprise and care! and what improvident and useless creatures we should become if all things were sure! From that point of view, a Thanksgiving Service might be arranged for a bad harvest, and special hymns be provided for the frustration of our expectation, and the thwarting of our

confident hope. But that would be possible only after an almost heroic suppression of self-seeking, and an almost unimaginable loyalty to the supremely subtle order of Natural Law.

But now go back to the old Hebrew poet, with these modern thoughts borne in mind. Interpret him by our perhaps more rational thoughts of Nature and God, and how rich he is! What deep meaning we can find, for instance, in the words:

That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

This is the picture of a great united human family, all knowing God's 'way' and rejoicing in His 'saving health.' This it is to praise God,—the offering to Him of willing obedience in His 'way,' and the possession therefore of 'health.' In such a case, all things would go well with the world. The earth would yield her increase, and God, indeed our own God, would bless us. It is a kind of gospel of co-operation; and that always is God's Gospel; for, as one of these Hebrew poets said, 'He is the king of all the earth;' and only by remembering that, and acting up to it, shall we find His 'way' and win the blessing of His 'saving health': and only so will the 'earth' as a whole yield her increase, with no more portions of it left in starving isolation. What can it matter if God smiles on the whole earth, if we do not love one another? God and Nature are working for the brotherhood of man.

If all the nations were wise to know God's 'way' and to receive God's 'saving health' we should make the best of everything in production. God's 'way' is the Father's way: and if we went in His way as children, and ordered all our land laws and laws of exchange in harmony therewith, the diffused wealth of the world would probably make us all independent of local circumstances: for, if all the nations were in this happy case, there would be perfect distribution as well as thrifty production. Peace and Free Trade are two of heaven's guardian-angels for blessing the world. God is manifestly providing for a Human Brother-

hood, and His 'blessing' will visibly and fully come to the human race when it understands this, and lives in harmony with it. This is the meaning of that deepest and divinest of all prayers; 'Let Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven!'

Thus understood, the 'Providence' of God would be removed entirely from the miasma of superstition, and prayer would take its proper place as a guide to service. We should no more say—'Lord, have mercy upon us!'—we should say—'Lord, teach us to have mercy upon ourselves!' We should even suspect, 'Let Thy kingdom come' as spoken to Him. We should begin to say to ourselves and one another—'Let His kingdom come!' We should begin to answer our own prayers; and find that God ever answers us through ourselves.

UNITY AND VARIETY IN RELIGION.

BY WILFRED VINER.

(Continued from page 234).

The Purposes of Religion.

Although we think the world worse than anyone else thinks it and are more unhappy than anyone else about all the sin and injustice and misery we see in it, we have the very strongest faith—we are perfectly certain—we are sure as if we saw it coming to pass here before us, that the world will come right at last.—*Kingsley*.

The method of Providence who, we assume, is controlling mundane events with purposive aims in accordance with His universal law of Evolution, may be beyond our understanding, for we are incapable of reconciling catastrophe with progress, nor can we conceive why Humanity is subject to the adverse influences and the serious consequences of what we commonly term good and evil.

Many philosophers have tried to solve the enigma of the blending of good and evil. Some have concluded that both phases are inevitable

consequences, manifesting themselves in the same way as the distinctions we draw between light and shade. Others avoid the difficulty by asserting that 'the Unknowable does not appear to take any special heed of what men do or suffer.' The doctrine that suggests God as the source of evil as well as the source of good may be true or not. It is enough for us to know by experience that evil (or what we conceive to be evil) really exists, and that our reason confirms the judgment of the higher forms of religion that it must be intended to cease.

Evolution has taught us that we are the creatures of heredity and environment. We inherit the moral qualities of our ancestors, we are moulded by surrounding circumstances. Those who come from a good stock will probably become good people. Others who come from a bad stock are likely to become bad people. None are responsible for their heredity, none have chosen their early environment. The world is only now awakening to the powerful influence of these two factors in making humanity what it is. We find in some individuals tendencies to improvement, in others tendencies to degeneration. Some are climbing, others are falling. If we had been born in a slum of vicious parentage what might we have become? Here is the mystery of Providence that seems unfathomable.

Religion is the gardener who, acting under the instructions of his superior, seeks to care for and improve the stock, for much can be done by cultivation and attention. It seeks the eradication of the moral evil that exists. It insists upon the change that comes over men's lives when they discover the purposes of their existence, when they learn that the higher, spiritual nature is intended to control their lower animal nature.

The aim of Religion is to elevate as well as to rescue, to aid man's growth in goodness and all the other excellencies, to make him a superior man. It leads men to acknowledge their dependence upon a Higher Power, to believe they are spiritual beings. It assumes the immortality of the soul and anticipates the life beyond the grave,

thus inspiring men with a sense of duty or responsibility.

According to those who infer rewards and punishments, we are now in a state of probation. If we view this another way, with others who say that 'virtue should be practiced for the sake of virtue alone,' we are equally in a state of preparation for a future existence, if the purposes of Religion are being fulfilled in our lives.

We conclude then that the end and aim of Religion is designed to be the moral improvement of humanity in general; and, when we meet with the combination of religion, philosophy and civilization, we see as a result the evolution of what we conceive to be the highest state of existence both socially and individually.

The systems of thought which seek to awaken a sense of duty that results in the practice of a Higher Life, take it for granted that we are moral responsible beings. If we accept this responsibility we assume the freedom of man's will. As the battle between the Libertarians and the Necessitarians is still waging, we prefer using the term duty in preference to responsibility, but, whichever opinion we may incline to, it seems rational that we should act objectively, as if we had freedom, although subjectively we may infer that to a great extent we are the creatures of circumstances.

If we want to have a religion we must adapt ourselves to the purposes of 'a Divinity who shapes our ends.' We must sacrifice ourselves for the interests of others, subordinating our egoism to altruism, we shall then effect the apparent object of our existence, taking our part in the carrying out of the Divine purpose which appears to be the moral improvement of humanity.

III.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION.

In one of our most widely-circulated weeklies* a discussion was recently carried on for some time, entitled 'What is Religion?'

**Reynolds's Newspaper.*

The difficulty of answering such a complex question, from a consideration of its details alone, was evident from the outset. It seemed impossible that either of the correspondents could frame a comprehensive definition that would be likely to receive anything further than a most partial acceptance. We do not know how the controversy ended but it showed the deep interest that all classes of society continue to take in religious topics and the wider theological views of to-day.

We have endeavoured to consider the question on the widest possible front which necessitates a somewhat limited definition. The definition we have arrived at may be open to many objections, but it seems necessary to have something to work with, so we will suggest that exclusive of the apparatus of Religion, relating to Ritual, Ceremonial and Organization, the main idea of Universal Religion refers to a region imperceptible to the senses, and the acknowledgment of a Higher Power or a Providence.

Stated definitely we propose to view Religion as a Faith or Belief in a Higher Power or a Providence, and in the Universe of Spirit, which may lead to a profession or acknowledgment of dependence upon God, united with or apart from a sense of duty or responsibility that results in the practice of a Higher Life.

The fundamentals of Religion refer to The Higher Power and The Universe of Spirit.

The Higher Power.

There is one God supreme over all Gods, diviner than mortals,

Whose form is not like unto man's, and as unlike his nature.
But vain mortals imagine that Gods like themselves are begotten

With human sensations and voice and corporeal members.

So if oxen or lions had hands and could work in man's fashion,

And trace out with chisel or brush their conception of God-head,

Then would horses depict Gods like horses, and oxen like oxen,

Each kind the Divine with its own form and nature endowing.

—*Xenophanes*, 500 B.C.

All the Classes of Religion assent to the

doctrine of the existence of God. The God of Brahmanism is a Pure Spirit, without attributes, who can only be worshiped symbolically. The God of Buddhism is the unknowable. The God-Man Buddha only can be worshiped. The God of Confucianism is only worshiped by proxy. The God of Christianity is a perpetual providence revealed in a Trinity. The God of Mohammedism is an absolute unity who rules by fore-determination.

We no longer need the idea of sacred books being a direct revelation from heaven announcing the existence of a God, if, with increased intelligence and wider views, we look upon the revelations of reason, conscience and experience as a surer guide, for the Book of Nature reveals a Providence 'who governs according to reason and therefore according to law.'*

From the inferences we deduce from an observation of His works, we can conceive and believe that God exists. The orderly course of the universe, the theories of its origin and development, the laws by which it is governed, the much abused argument from design, all terminate in conceptions of the eternal and the infinite. The operations of cause and effect in the moral world, the associations of virtue and happiness, the possibilities of our leading higher lives, the preponderance of benevolent intentions, the very necessity for some explanations of purposive aims and unity of purpose, lead us to infer the existence of a Divine Providence the source of the highest good who, solicitous for our welfare has endowed us with almost Divine faculties, and established invariable laws for our guidance.

Our intellectual difficulties increase if we assume the contrary inference, the non-existence of a higher power, for a self evolved world without purposive aims is inconceivable.

If we agree that 'everything in the universe, including man and his religion, has grown in obedience to one continuous law,'† cannot we believe in the control of a power 'existing behind

* Draper.

† 'In search of a Religion.'

and acting through evolution and directing human affairs to a predetermined end? '†

We infer the existence of a Divine Providence who overrules the intentions of humanity, as individuals, when they interfere with His methods, yet in a general way uses humanity as instruments for the steady fulfilment of His intentions which may very properly, at present, be only partly comprehended by our understanding.

Our conceptions of the higher power change with the advance of our thought. If we have commenced at the stage of acknowledgment, and have risen to a full sense of our dependence on Him and the duty we owe to Him, the name we express Him by, or the manifestations we think we see Him in, are surely of little moment, for all our terms prove utterly inadequate, we can get no farther than the impression of perfect goodness.

Human language has not yet expressed all the modes in which a Supreme Power may exist, for with our limited faculties it seems impossible to form a notion of existences that are not partially subject to terrestrial conditions.

Ideas of a personal deity appear to imply limitation; apprehensions of an impersonal God are equally bewildering; contemplations of universal unity extinguish our hopes of conscious futurity; thoughts of an unknowable leave us as orphans; too great a familiarity seems a presumption.

'An understood God would be no God at all, and to imagine God is what we think would be blasphemy.*

We may catch glimpses of Him in nature and conceive Him as the omnipresent, the omnipotent, the omniscient one; or, in the higher realm, as a God of holiness, truth and righteousness, the essence of all excellencies in their infinite degree, but the ascription of anything resembling human form, qualities and affections, however such conceptions may apparently assist us, seem to be most improper and unbecoming.

† W. H. Mallock's Review of Dr. Crozier's Book.

* Jacobi.

The Universe of Spirit.

The Spiritual World is another system of nature incommunicably separate from ours. God has in fact erected another and higher system, that of spiritual being and government for which nature exists; a system not under the law of cause and effect, but ruled and marshalled under other kinds of laws.'—BUSHNELL's *Nature and the Supernatural*.

The conception of the universe of spirit, by which we mean the actual existence of spirit independently of matter, appears to be the basis of the whole superstructure of religious belief or faith, for, if man has no soul and no hope of a future beyond, religion seems unnecessary.

Religion assumes the reality of the spiritual world, the real under the phenomenal, an interior system of nature co-existent with the realm which is perceptible to our senses. It takes for granted that our material structure is but the house we dwell in—the physical manifestation of the reality beneath the phenomena.

Brahmanism teaches that the universe is composed of spirit and illusion. It views the material world as but the shadow of God. Souls are formless emanations from the infinite being 'doomed to be absorbed again like drops in the ocean, or sparks from the central fire of Brahma separated for a time only.'*

Buddhism contemplates the material world as a theatre of operations between souls and natural laws. It developed the ancient Vedic idea that all existence has emanated from the supreme power by a process resembling the emanation of light from the sun. All things when they have completed their destined circular movement will return whence they came and be re-absorbed in the infinite. Its conception of immortality is oblivion.

Confucianism is inseparable from the idea of a supernatural region. Its teaching is essentially spiritualistic for it affirms the possibility of communicating with departed spirits through the medium of votive offerings. It attributes spirit and matter to the same cause but views its effects as resulting in unity and variety.

Mohammedism holds out to its followers the

* Clarke's 'Ten Great Religions,' and Draper's 'Religion and Science.'

promise of a paradise of houris. It teaches a resurrection to perpetual bliss or torment in hell.

Christianity is the highest form of spiritualism. It conceives the reality of the two hemispheres—the natural world and the spiritual world. It teaches the certainty of heaven and hell. It teaches that there are higher intelligences who are angels or devils, that man may be elevated above the region of sense, where his animal propensities preponderate, and become an associate of the spirit world, where his higher nature will control his lower. Heaven may begin on this earth, and, after the dissolution of our material bodies, we may, if we are faithful, look for a conscious independent existence beyond the grave, for ‘Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.’

We therefore conclude that one of the fundamentals of religion is a faith or belief in the universe of spirit with its consequential inference, the immortality of the soul of man.

Scientific evolution has taught us much relating to the physical universe, but it has not up to the present given us an explanation of the passage from the inorganic to the organic, nor has it revealed the bridge connecting the finite and the infinite, the material and the spiritual.

The material universe, viewed from a religious standpoint, appears to be an inferior realm subservient to the realm of spirit; matter is under the control of mind; mind is controlled by spirit; matter is apprehended by the senses; spirit by the mind. The spiritual universe is totally imperceptible to our senses, yet we can conceive it exists in the same way that, although we are unable to imagine any boundary to space, we conclude it must be infinite.

Cannot we infer the real under the phenomenal? Are we limited to the evidence of our senses? If we believe in the material in motion, what are the forces that operate but immaterial or infinite conceptions? If power is that which, applied, produces motion or force, is it not rational to assume that the universe is controlled by a higher power?

The forces may, for the purposes of examination, be distinguished as physical, mechanical,

external and moral. We may use such terms as radiant or chemical force, gravitation or electricity, but, whether we refer to the motive power that produces movement or the inertia that tends to preserve the material in a state of rest, we find that something immaterial exists which is the cause of matter dormant or in motion. We infer the existence of noumena as well as the sensible phenomena. We form a conception of the real under the phenomena, and arrive at the conclusion that noumena is the ultimate. So by another term we express our belief in the universe of spirit which is believed by the religious world in general.

Modern science disbelieves in the existence of Soul as it is unable to find where it is located. The ancients supposed that it conformed to the shape of the body, which is an advance on the idea of the savage, that it is man's own shadow. We are unable to solve the enigma. All we do know is that some of us realise that the body is not the conscious self—it is not the ego—which is the seat of the intelligence that controls even the mind. Call it spirit, soul, or what you choose, we incline to believe in this spiritual self-control that governs our thoughts, actions and affections. So we infer the noumena within the phenomena of our own frames. We agree with a Moham-medan writer that 'Our frames are nothing more than contrivances through which a current of matter is constantly flowing. The forms we had on entering this world and our present forms are not the same, hence there is no necessity for our perishing on account of the perishing of our bodies.'* We believe in self government, self control, by 'which we can raise ourselves above the world of sense, and become members of a world of spirit.'†

(To be continued.)

* Draper's 'Religion and Science.'

† Pfleiderer's 'Development of Theology.'

AN ALLEGORY AND A PROPHECY.

BY CARLETON F. BROWN.

(Concluded from page 240.)

It was several days before he came back again, and for the last time.

‘A strange book!’ he said, handing me again the Bible I had loaned him. ‘A coat of many colours!’ Then, coming close and laying his hand on my shoulder, he added with the kindest possible smile, ‘If Christianity holds that book for its God’s truth, do not be too sure, my friend, that you have not your traditions and superstitions as well as Buddhism and the others. But they had their glimpses!’ he added, his face lighting up. And taking the book again he turned over the pages and read some sentences which he had marked :

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?

Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?

Judge not that ye be not judged: for, with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

By their fruits ye shall know them. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

God that made the world and all things therein, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is He served by men’s hands as though He needed anything. For in Him we live and move and have our being.

‘I have been to your church services, and talked with your ministers as to the meaning of what I saw. But it seems to me that for the most part your churches are occupied, not with religion, but with forms and ceremonies. I heard two of your learned men discussing at great length and with much warmth the question as to the proper method of baptizing people. In one church which I visited, the people went forward at a certain signal, and knelt down while the priest put in their mouths a wafer. This wafer he afterwards told

me contained the bodily presence of Christ, but he said it would have been highly displeasing to God and of no value whatever, if, as in other churches, this had been distributed to the people while they sat in their seats. And so it seems to me that by continually talking of these trifling matters, men come at length to forget that they are members of one great family upon whom God shines daily with His great sun of blessing.'

'What are the forms of religious services with you?' I inquired. 'Do you not have sacraments and liturgies?'

'We have no sacraments, except that on an appointed day of every month all our people gather in their respective meeting places where tables have been spread for the occasion, and there enjoy together a simple, common meal, with gladness of heart.'

'Our ritual is of the simplest sort, and is of a kind suggested by nature rather than tradition. There is every week the 'Service of Joy' in which we try to express as spontaneously as possible the joy of life. The music begins with the imitation of a bird's morning carol, which swells gradually into a majestic anthem of praise, with the full power of orchestra and chorus. The people stand and repeat with full spirit the sentences arranged for the occasion. The entire service throbs with the inspiration of hope and life. It is always at the morning hour.'

'Then we have also our "Service of Sympathy," designed especially for those who mourn, or are passing through great trial or anxiety. To this come those who have felt the pang of loss or the weight of grief. The music is such as soothes and consoles. Then, too, their friends come with them and show their sympathy by silently taking their hands and sitting by their sides.'

'Then there is the great service of the week, which we call the "Brotherhood-Binding." To this all come and repeat their pledges of mutual kindness and obligation.'

'But do you not have any sermons in your world?'

'I do not know whether you would call them such,' he replied. 'When we all come together at

the "Brotherhood-Binding" we listen to an address on some phase of humanity's life. We are never exhorted as to what we must believe, for this is held to be the sacred right of the individual.'

'Then even you have differences of belief among yourselves?'

'Assuredly we have,' he replied, 'otherwise our life would be most stupid and uninteresting. Just as we have our different schools of science, so also there are widely differing schools of philosophy and theology. These are given free scope for inquiry and discussion, for we believe that out of diversity of opinion truth will eventually be established. We never seek to establish our own opinions by suppressing those of others. Our very confidence in the truth of our beliefs leads us to invite the fullest and most candid discussion. Nor do we see any reason for hating or despising those who continue to hold beliefs different from our own. And this is what amazes me above all, in the people of your world. When you assure me that they are accustomed to separate from each other, to slander each other and have been known even to kill one another, because they do not hold the same opinion, I cannot understand what madness possesses them. If I could only show them how much simpler is the way of universal toleration, they would adopt it in a single day. If only I could prevail upon them to forget by what name they and their fathers have been called, and to come together as men and women, filled with the same deep hopes and longings, living in the same great universe of beauty, sharing the great destiny of humanity!—and I believe this would not be difficult to accomplish.'

'Do not consider such a thing for a moment,' I cried in alarm. 'I know these people better than you do. If you should go forth and talk to them after this manner they would call you an infidel or a Unitarian; and they would cry out against you as one who sought to destroy the foundations of religion.'

'Destroy religion!' he repeated, with the only trace of scorn I had seen on his face. 'Such people do not know what religion is.'

But I persuaded him at length of the im-

possibility of his idea. I told him how many prophets and martyrs and poets had cherished the same dream, and had attempted the same task of uniting the human race in a universal religion, founded upon the recognition of the common brotherhood of mankind. But how the priests had hated them and cried out against them in the name of their oracles and traditions, and how the people had stoned some of them, and others they had crucified, albeit they were among the purest and noblest souls that ever lived.

When I finally convinced him that such a wild project as he had proposed was not for a moment to be thought of, his face saddened, and, bidding me a sorrowful adieu, he picked up his package of memoranda, now grown far bulkier than at first, and returned to his own world, Alcestra.

* * * *

But after he had gone, I dreamed again—a dream of the future. And it seemed to me that after our earth's long ages of bloodshed and cruelty, its frightful persecutions and smouldering jealousies and prejudices, its intolerant bigots and tiresome, narrow-minded ecclesiastics, at length the unceasing progress of evolution brought the dawn of the Alcestran age upon our own sphere. The people grew dissatisfied with old creed-bound systems of thought, and they began to widen the limits of brotherhood. First, various hostile sects sent out flags of truce and proclaimed an armistice. At length there came a time when the representatives of the various religions of the earth came together; not as before, in arms or in fierce spirit of controversy, but with outstretched palms, meeting in friendly conference, that they might better understand and sympathise with each other's faith and worship.

And lo! it was found that their religions were all fundamentally the same, differing only as the speech and customs of the various nations and tribes differed from each other.

And when men saw that this was so they could not restrain their joy. 'Hereafter,' they cried, 'there shall be no temple that is not as broad as the blue sky above! There shall be no

creed, but that each man shall pledge himself to TRUTH. Our universal sacrament shall be the love and service of our fellowmen. Our "book of common prayer" shall be the pages in the great book of nature, imprinted everywhere with the power, the beauty, the mystery of the infinite LIFE.'

GEORGE MACDONALD.

AN APPRECIATION, BY E. GALLIENNE-RÔBIN.

'THE world knows nothing of its greatest men' is a trite saying, and, glibly spoken, is in the mouth of most of us. The term, 'greatest men,' naturally includes those who are eminently fitted to be the teachers of this same world, that passes them by or heeds them not, and amongst these teachers George MacDonald takes foremost rank by the sublime simplicity of his message and the height and breadth of his spirituality. But how few, comparatively, realise that, living amongst us, we have a prophet in this versatile poet, sermon writer and novelist, this deep-hearted Scotchman, whose creations stand out living, original and strong! Clearing the ground before us and leaving side issues, the study of the works of George MacDonald leaves upon the mind two distinct lines of thought.

(1). 'That God is awake and utterly loving.'

(2). That the only road to spiritual knowledge is the way of daily obedience to the duty that lies nearest, 'to know He will have us go in at the grand entrance of obedient faith.'

It will probably at once be said that in this teaching there is nothing new, nothing original. That may be so, but George MacDonald has grasped it and then made it clear as no one else has done. It is the *raison d'être* of everything he has written, and it comes to us in such unhackneyed language, such beautiful phrasing, that we are at once arrested and enchained. He is entirely fearless of accepted opinions when he is in pursuit of a pregnant thought: he is the most common-sense and sane of men in his practical helps to

daily living : and yet none have soared higher than he in exalted flights of imagination.

All lovely and exquisite things, touched by his genius, assume forms more beautiful still. Love, poetry, music, are to him ineffably dear, and Nature is the very presence-chamber of the invisible. His far-reaching and deep-searching thoughtfulness singles out loveliness, humility and contentment for special study, and numerous examples of this may be found in the characters of his books. But it must be clearly understood that it is only the close student who will be enabled to grasp MacDonald's deep, lucid thoughts. A superficial and casual reading will result in disappointment, and those who approach his novels with an idea of mere amusement, will turn away from stories in which the plots are of secondary interest, and from conversations which at once plunge beneath the surface of a life of easeful days and empty pleasures.

But to those who give diligent heed, and sit at the feet of this teacher, will be revealed waters that quench thirst and bread that satisfies. Under his guidance there are heights to be scaled and valleys to be crossed, where the heart learns as it has never learnt before, the meaning of life and death. Not a common-place expression, not a cant phrase of ordinary religious talk, ever jars on the ear as we drink in the teaching of George MacDonald. Sorrow, joy, riches, poverty, doubt, faith, righteousness and sin—one and all—are to him the servants of the will of God, who is evolving, in majestic patience (we say it with deepest reverence), the perfection of all things.

A CURE FOR INSOMNIA.

A WRITER in *Freedom*, referring to insomnia, has just about hit the mark. He says;—

‘Do not *try* to sleep, and, if wakeful, take the position mentally that you do not care, and are going to lie still and see what you are to receive while awake, and in all things treat your body as

if asleep. One of the worst forms of maniac is an insomniac, people who count the hours they do not sleep. "Blessed be the man who invented sleep," and thrice blessed the man or woman who knows how to use the invention. Go to bed as a child, and you will wake up joyous as the lark, and ought to so express yourself when you awake. "I have slept in peace, and now arise in power, peace, perfection and prosperity," is a good morning salutation to the rest of the universe of which you are an essential part.'

There is a great truth here. The vital points are;—

Never let the library, the study, the office, the novel, the magazine, intrude into the bedroom, unless the patient is 'confined to his room.' When in ordinary health, go to bed, as near as possible, at the same time every night.

Drink slowly half-a-pint of hot water with a good wine-glassful of cold milk in it.

Sleep alone.

Shut the eyes before lying down, as soon as the bed is touched even.

Lie on the right side, and do not stir. However wakeful, be still. Do not care: do not think: do not be solemn; laugh a little if you can, very quietly.

Do not try any patent way of going to sleep: simply lie still; and if you *must* think, think of all the sunrises and sunsets, the pretty flowers and lovely seashores you have ever seen—especially when you were alone.

Never wonder what o'clock it is. Don't know. To strike a light and see is fatal. Don't care.

The beautiful result may not come all at once. But be very patient and very calm. Do not be anxious; give it time. Above all things, do not try hard to go to sleep. Be careless and quiet, but let the strong, peaceful will be gently firm.

If you *must* pray, say to yourself; 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name.'

THE GREAT THIEVES OF EUROPE.

IF we were not so used to it, we should look with something like horror upon the proceedings of the great 'Potentates' or 'Powers' who arrogate to themselves the right to do as they please with the little 'Potentates' and 'Powers' of the world. In this country, the thieves are now, to a certain extent, held back by the justice and honesty of a considerable portion of the population, but, unless the predatory instincts and adventures are brought sharply to their notice, even these just and honest people 'let things slide,' and permit the thieves to go on with their 'forward policy,' as in Africa and India. In other countries, notably in Russia, the great thieves have it all their own way.

Take the case of Finland.* Here is a thrifty, honest and highly civilised little nation being exploited in the most rascally manner by the Russian government. In spite of laws and pledges, of, apparently, the most binding character, the huge bully is demanding from Finland thousands of conscripts and vast sums of money for the strengthening of the Russian army. This, practically, is an attempt to drag Finland back into old barbaric ways from which it has been steadily escaping,—a pitiable sight! and so entangled is the Finnish people in the net of the thief that it actually permits itself to speak and write the usual degrading drivel of adoring loyalists in addressing or referring to the Imperial despoiler. When will these self-respecting and freedom-loving little nations be able to cut themselves adrift from these old tyrannies and superstitions, and be truly free? Perhaps the gross arrogance and selfishness of the royal and imperial robbers will itself, in time, teach the necessary lesson, and bless them with a little more of Switzerland's sturdy independence and Mr. Kruger's dogged common-sense and pluck.

* See 'Finland' Nos. 1 & 2. London: 106, Victoria Street. Price Threepence each.

THE OLD VIRUS.

THE marriage of Miss Jewell with a Lobengula has brought out the ugly fact that here in England we still cherish the spirit of the old slave-driver, and black man oppressor. 'A White Man,' writing in *The Daily Mail*, says that he has lived in Cape Colony, and that the news of this marriage may lead to the wildest uprising on the part of the black population. Why? He tells us.

At present, they believe in our 'superiority': and 'it is fear, and fear alone, which holds them in check.'

It is necessary that the commonest white man should be regarded as a great chief and the commonest white woman as a great lady. The marriage, therefore, is not merely an insult to every white woman in Africa, but a menace to every white citizen. When these Matabele go back to their native country the word will run like wildfire that in England the white men treated them as brothers.

Think of that! The very essence of Christianity is the very thing we have to fear! and we are in deadly danger from the odious rumour that in England we actually treat black men as brothers!

Could anything better illustrate what is going on in South Africa, and how much need there is to watch our precious Chartered Companies and their gangs of adventurers?

It is, of course, highly desirable that Englishwomen should be excessively careful in this dangerous path: but that is not the question: the question is that which is suggested by the 'White Man's' horror of the thought that we treat the black man as a brother here.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

Æsop's fable of the wolf and the lamb, told or written over 2,400 years ago, might have been told or written by Mr. Kruger yesterday. Here it is:—

'As a wolf was eagerly drinking at the head of a running stream, he saw a lamb lapping a long way off, down stream. Having made up his mind to capture it, he cast about for something to justify it. "Monster!" he cried, "how dare you foul the

water I am drinking?" "Indeed," gently replied the lamb, "the water runs from you to me, and so I don't see how I can foul the water up there." "Hough!" said the wolf, "but a year ago you called me names." "O dear no, sir," said the lamb, "I was not born then." "Well, it was your father, then, and that is all the same," said the wolf: "but anyhow, you are not going to talk me out of my supper:" and with that he sprang upon the lamb and devoured it. So we see that a tyrant is never short of a reason!

The parallel is perfect. Poor old wolf-human nature! It is very much the same in every age! That touch, 'The (defiled) water runs from you to me,' is lovely in the circumstances.

SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS.

THERE is, in the United States, a certain Moses Hull, whose writings on Spiritualism in the Bible deserve serious recognition. In a late number of 'The Light of Truth' he gives a specimen of his useful work. We quote the whole of it, minus a few sentences on another subject:—

The prophets were mediums—nothing more; they belong alike to every age and nation of the world. They had them in the days of the apostles; we have them to-day. In Acts xi. 27, 28, the writer says:—

'And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world; which came in the days of Claudius Cæsar.'

I wish this text read, 'In those days came mediums from Jerusalem to Antioch.' It would represent the Greek as well as it does now, and would be more readily understood. One of these prophets or mediums, named Agabus, 'signified by the spirit,' that is, he prophesied under spirit power, of the dearth, or drouth, that should come. The disciples believed this prediction, and sent relief to those on whom it should come most heavily.

Now let us pass to the closing event of Peter's mediumship. It is, if it is truly told, one of the finest manifestations on record. It will be found in the twelfth chapter of Acts. Herod had caused James to be beheaded, and now he had taken Peter and pronounced the sentence of death on him, and caused him to be put in a safe prison until his birthday, when he would celebrate the anniversary of his birth by having Peter publicly slain. The record says Peter was kept

in prison (verse 5); but the church did not give up—it prayed for him continually. To bring the matter before the reader I quote from verse 6 to and including verse 11.

‘And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison, and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly, and his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.’

Let us first notice the extra effort to keep Peter in that prison.

1. He was put to sleep between two soldiers. It would seem that there was no possibility of his getting away without waking them.

2. He was bound with two chains. There have been, and I presume there are now, mediums that chains will not hold.

3. There were keepers before the door on the watch. Now please observe the manifestations;—

1. An angel went into the jail and was seen by Peter.

2. There was a spirit light. ‘A light shined in the prison.’

3. A touch was the next phenomenon. ‘The angel smote him, and told him to arise.’

4. His chains fell off. Did anyone ever hear of chains or ropes falling off of mediums?

5. The angel started and Peter followed.

6. The doors opened with no visible hand touching them. ‘And the door opened of its own accord.’

7. The angel walked one whole block with Peter, after he was out of prison, before he left him, or before Peter’s clairvoyance so far left him that he thought the angel was gone.

8. ‘And when Peter was come to himself.’ This signifies that the angel had put Peter into a trance, or into a semi-hypnotic condition, inasmuch that he was not himself.

Besides the manifestations here mentioned, was the manifestation of putting the guards and the soldiers to sleep. But the matter does not end here. The arena is removed, that is all.

All the time these manifestations were going on, the church was at the house of Mary holding a praying seance. The burden of their prayer was for the deliverance of Peter. There is an immense power in this concentration of thought, as in earnest prayer. The matter can not be better stated than in the language of the writer of the book of Acts.

In verses 13-16 he says; 'And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.'

This manifestation was so great that even those who had been calling for it could not believe it to be a reality. There were the raps—the knocks on the gate, and the girl exclaiming that she recognised the voice of Peter. The raps were explained by saying, 'It is his angel.' That was an acknowledgment that angels could come and rap on doors and gates. The girl's story was explained by accusing her of insanity—'the damsel is mad.'

I would like to ask my Christian friends if they really believe this story, as here related? If they do, why deny similar phenomena now? Do they believe that wise man who wrote in the Bible, 'that which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.'—Ecc. iii. 15. The fact is, like cause produces like effect. Any phenomenon that ever did occur, may occur again in the same circumstances. There is no logic in the world which can endorse that Bible story that will not endorse similar phenomena to-day.

WHAT GLADSTONE SAID.

O FOR an hour of Gladstone! The following from a speech of his at Edinburgh, in 1884, will give us an idea of what he would say to-day:—

In our judgment the attempt of the Administration then in power (1880) to put down the people of the Transvaal, to extinguish their freedom, and to annex them against their will to England, was a scandalous and disastrous attempt. When we got into office we were assured by all the local agents of the British Government—and I have no doubt they spoke in honour and sincerity—that the people of the Transvaal had changed their minds, and were perfectly contented to be annexed to the British Empire. That made it our duty to pause for a while; and for a short while, accordingly, we did pause. However much we had opposed the previous Government, it was our duty not to make changes without good and sufficient cause. But before we had been very long in office, the people of the Transvaal rose in arms, and showed us pretty well what their feelings and intentions were; and they obtained several successes over the limited body of British troops then in South Africa. We felt it was an absolute duty, under those circumstances, to reinforce our military power in that region; and we sent a force to South Africa which would unquestionably have been sufficient to defeat any power that the Dutch Burghers—the Boers—could bring into the field against us. But the Boers asked us for an accommodation. What is called the Jingo party in this country was horribly scandalised,

because we listened to that application. We had got our forces there, ready to chastise them. We might have shed their blood, we might have laid prostrate on the field hundreds, possibly thousands, of that small community, and then we should have vindicated the reputation of this country, according to the creed of that particular party. Having undoubted power in our hands, we thought that the time to be merciful is when you are strong. We were strong; we could afford to be merciful. We entered into arrangements with the Transvaal, and the Transvaal recovered its independence.

We gave up the Transvaal on considerations of honour, and on considerations of policy. The consideration of honour was that when the scheme for taking it was first mooted, Lord Carnarvon, who was Secretary of State (I think it was Lord Carnarvon, but if not, it was his successor, Sir Michael Hicks Beach) declared in the name of this country that we only intended to take the Transvaal if it were agreeable to the sense of the population—meaning the white population. What happened? There were 8,000 white settlers in the Transvaal—that was the computed number of adult heads of families, the gross number being, I think, about 40,000. Out of these 8,000, about 1,000 were English and miscellaneous, and about 7,000 were Dutchmen—men of strong and masculine fibre, reared in that school of Calvinism which, whatever else may be said of it, made our ancestors a strong and determined race. And these 7,000 men subscribed 7,000 signatures to a petition protesting against their annexation to this country. I ask whether it was in honour possible, without the grossest and most shameless breach of faith, to persist in holding them when we had pledged ourselves beforehand that they should not be annexed except with their own goodwill?

After stating such a case of honour as that, I am ashamed almost to refer to the subject of policy. But I will say one word upon that, and it is this—the people of the Transvaal, few in number, were in close and strong sympathy with their brethren in race, language and religion. Throughout South Africa these men, who are called Afrianders, partly British subjects and partly not, were as one man associated in feeling with the people of the Transvaal; and, had we persisted in that dishonourable attempt, against all our own interests, to coerce the Transvaal as we attempted to coerce Afghanistan, we should have had the whole mass of the Dutch population at the Cape and throughout South Africa rising in arms against us. So much for the Transvaal; and I am not aware that there is to be said anything which can possibly form a deduction, a serious deduction, from the propositions I have laid down.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

Truth takes us behind the scenes, and gives us an extremely useful glimpse of 'the inwardness' of a discreditable conspiracy. We believe it to be indeed the truth;—

The impartiality of a good many of the correspondents

in South Africa of the Rhodes organs in this country, may be estimated by the position of Mr. Garrett, the correspondent of the *Daily News*. This gentleman was on the staff of the *Westminster Gazette*, and he is a clever journalist of the emotional type. The principal shareholders of this newspaper are also shareholders in the De Beers Company; and Mr. Rutherford Harris, the former secretary of the South African Chartered Company, was, and presumably still is, a shareholder in the newspaper. Mr. Garrett had written strongly in support of Mr. Rhodes when on the *Westminster Gazette*. He was appointed Editor of the *Cape Times*. The investigations into the Jameson Raid showed that he was in the secrets of the conspirators; indeed, no sooner did the Johannesburg capitalists break out into rebellion, than he hurried up to that place to induce them to fight.

Mr. Garrett has since been elected a member of the Cape Legislature, as an opponent to the present Ministry of the Colony. As a member of that party he advocates its cause, and lauds the capitalists. . . . Of course Mr. Garrett has the same right as anyone else to entertain and to express his opinions. But he can hardly be deemed an impartial correspondent. When not telegraphing sensational trash in the interests of the Rhodes party, he telegraphs extracts of articles from the *Cape Times*, in order to show that public opinion at the Cape is with him. In this latter habit he is emulated by Sir Alfred Milner, whose despatches home are stuffed with *Cape Times* articles, especially with those that praise him. It really is full time that this sort of log-rolling should be exposed.

MORE CARLYLE LETTERS.*

WE are always doubtful about the publication of private or domestic letters; and we have no particular admiration for the people who revel in them: but the public should perhaps have the benefit of the doubt when it is desirable that light should be thrown upon the domestic life of a notable public character. We are not quite sure whether this was ever desirable in Carlyle's case. We incline to think it was not. His work should have stood alone. But, as so much has been made of Carlyle's life, apart from his work, it is probably not only a good thing but a necessary thing that these very homely domestic letters should be offered to the world. And, in truth, they are very homely, as they could not help being, in the circumstances; but, while it is pleasant to find him always alert for brotherly consideration, giving the kindest possible suggestions as to health, food and clothing, it is not a little puzzling to see the great man in his shirt sleeves, as it were, writing about oatmeal and cheese, snuff and shirts, hams and new potatoes, tobacco and castor oil, and giving anxious directions about finding in a washstand drawer 'a little piece of new stuff for rubbing on his razor strop.' But there are, of

* Letters of Thomas Carlyle to his youngest sister. With portraits and other illustrations. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

course, deeper things in these letters; though, in all, one sees the peasant Carlyle coming into loving touch with his peasant folk.

The title of this book is not exact, as it contains many letters to persons other than the youngest sister. A great number of them, and some of the most homely and human, are to his old peasant mother. The impression one gets on the whole is that Carlyle never got really reconciled to the man-made world; that his heart was with nature and her simple children, and that he went forth to the fight only as one driven by The Hand which forced him on.

The intrinsic merit of these letters is not great, though here and there are passages of rarest wisdom, homely but practically deep. His kinsfolk were not a successful set on the whole, and his letters to them or concerning them naturally turned very much upon patience, courage, steady work and hopefulness: and concerning these there is much wise counsel from the big, strong, fighting brother. But, we imagine, that the chief value of these letters will be found in their blending with the letters and reminiscences already published. If some of those revealed him as morbid, bitter and truculent, these will shew him as uniformly wholesome, sweet and self-sacrificing,—a loving son and true brother, through many years; in fact, throughout his life.

When all is told, Thomas Carlyle stands and will stand as one of the bravest and sanest-minded of modern prophets. He was reckless in some of his estimates and wrong in some of his forecasts; but the fading century has not seen a man whose sympathies were, on the whole, more generous, and whose battle flag stood more visibly for justice and honour, veracity and righteousness.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

NEMESIS.—The United States is going the old sad road. Its brutal course in the Philippines is alarming all the South American Republics. The following telegram is painfully ominous;—

‘PROPOSED HOSTILE ALLIANCE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

New York.

‘According to a telegram received here from Rio de Janeiro, it is stated there that, in spite of denials, General Roca, the Argentine President, is desirous of negotiating an alliance between Argentina, Brazil and Chili against the United States, and that the Presidents of the three Republics will meet at Buenos Ayres in September.’

How European this is! and we thought the United States prided itself on being free from our old bloody complications.

THE ROYAL EAGLES. — After the Rhodes raid, the German Emperor telegraphed his congratulations to Mr.

Kruger, and all club and official England was stung by that. The Emperor had his own game to play then. Since that time we have probably squared him, and *The Daily News* laughs. This is what it lately said on page 5;—

‘The Anglo-German Africa Agreement has so far been kept secret, but it seems to be certain that it pays Germany not to lay obstacles in England’s way. Hence the complete indifference of the German Government at the present juncture.’

And this is what it said on page 4;—

‘The German Emperor’s visit to this country, foreshadowed some little time ago (as we pointed out), by the Prince of Wales’s speech, has been arranged for the ensuing autumn. At the last Transvaal crisis the Emperor telegraphed to Mr. Kruger. Now he is coming to see the Queen. The contrast, if Mr. Kruger would think of it, is significant of much.’

Truly it is ‘significant.’ ‘Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.’

ROYAL SPORTS.—The Prince of Wales, we all know, is a wonderful sportsman. He takes the greatest possible pleasure in sitting upon a stool in a park, having beautiful birds driven his way, and shooting them as fast as he can, a man standing by his side to load a second gun as soon as he hands him the first. All this gentleman does is to take guns from the loader’s hands and shoot till he is tired. ‘God bless the Prince of Wales!’

A late number of *The Woman at Home* contains, as is now the fashion, an article on ‘Royalty.’ It is entitled ‘Royal Amusements,’ and it entertains us with pictures. One picture depicts a man by himself in a boat, and the inscription is, ‘Wild duck shooting at Wolferton; a favourite amusement with the Duke of York.’ Is not that a help to our adoring loyalty? A wild duck is a beautiful creature, and, in many ways, is a beautiful object where it lives. It may be desirable to shoot one when food is wanted, but fancy doing it for ‘amusement!’ God help the Duke of York!

SPIRITUALISM.—This, said by Tennyson, is worth remembering:—‘Spiritualism must not be judged by its quacks. . . . I do not see why its central truth is untenable. If we would think about this truth, it would become very natural and reasonable to us. Why should those who have gone before, not surround and minister to us, as legions of angels surrounded and ministered to our Lord?’

IS AIR GETTING SCARCE?—A London publication prints prominently an article on ‘Is air getting scarce?’ No wonder! The world is stinking with used up or defiled air. Even on board the ‘Argonaut,’ on the Mediterranean, where one hoped for sweet air, the ship had to carry along a con-

stant little stench of tobacco. Notices were posted that smoking was not permitted on certain parts of the boat, but the partner in charge, Mr. Perowne, and his officers deliberately stunk those very places out with the stuff they probably called tobacco. As for London! Hell help us! There is not much air left there, except in church: and no one knows how long we shall keep that free from the silly cigarette or even the polluting pipe. We have already seen 'lighting up' in the porch!

THE APOSTLES' CREED. — *The Outlook* votes for that historical fraud called 'The Apostles' Creed,' but admits that it was never constructed, 'but grew.' It prefers it to the Nicene Creed, because it is 'fact, and very simple fact,' while the Nicene Creed is philosophy, and some of it not very intelligible philosophy. But that is why we specially dislike the 'Apostles' Creed,' because there is no mistaking its so-called 'facts,' while anything can be made of the Nicene's so-called 'philosophy.' That plain-as-a-pikestaff Apostles' Creed is the worst in Christendom, because the most obviously untrue.

THE DUKHOBORTSI. — We have received a most interesting and touching circular from the committee for assisting the emigration of the Dukhobortsi. We advise all our good-hearted readers to send for a copy of it, to Mr. Isaac Sharp, 12, Bishopsgate Without, London, who will be glad to receive contributions, large or small. 'A good cause!'

FINERY AND SAVAGERY. — Well done Adrienne Veigélé! This lady in her London address on 'Love of Dress' said; 'The love of finery and showy decoration is more pronounced in women than in men. The more intellectual a race of people became, the less importance would they attach to dress. Fashion is but a remnant of barbarism, and is one of the abominations of the present day. Empty-headed so-called "well dressed" women had nothing to do but satisfy their craving for admiration; but this extraordinary love for personal adornment should be discouraged by providing suitable and profitable channels for female thought. It was perfectly scandalous that many women should be buying half-a-dozen dresses at a cost of £80 or £90 each. Such action could only be the outcome of a shallow and empty mind.'

AN ACUTE PRAYER. — They do say that a little girl in America took her evening prayer into her own hands lately, at the close, and made the following sudden addition; 'And please, O Lord, take care of yourself, too! for if anything should happen to you, we couldn't have anybody but McKinley to depend on, and he isn't doing as well as papa expected.'

NOTES ON BOOKS.

'LAWLESSNESS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.' A speech by Samuel Smith, Esq., M.P., in the House of Commons. London: C. J. Thynne. No one can deny that Mr. Smith has put together an indictment of quite thrilling interest against the absurd clerical persons who are perverting history, insulting Nonconformity, and stealing the Nation's Church. The pamphlet, we are glad to see, is having a large sale. It is only twopence.

'THE AMERICAN-SPANISH WAR. A HISTORY BY THE WAR LEADERS.' London: Gay and Bird. This is one of several books on the late war. We have a very strong opinion that our friends across the ocean have been about a hundred times too jubilant and self-congratulating over that war. They performed no such wonderful feats of arms as some of them like to fancy. Spain was far-off, poor and rotten, and yet America took a mighty lot of trouble to clear her distant soldiers and seamen out. There is not much room for swagger. We are afraid that the effects of the war will prove a hateful legacy.

'THE VALE OF HEALTH: OR OVERSTRAND AND SIDE-STRAND, PAST AND PRESENT.' By George Beckett. London: Jarrold and Sons. A pleasant story concerning a pleasant place. 'Overstrand,' as everybody knows, is near Cromer, and is well named 'The Vale of Health.' Clement Scott once sang its praises, as 'Poppyland;' and now George Beckett gives us its history, as an instructive bit of Old England:—a very readable and prettily illustrated little work.

THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE.

A FIRE mist and a planet,
 A crystal and a cell;
 A jelly fish and saurian,
 And caves where the cave men dwell.
 Then a sense of law and beauty,
 And a face turned from the clod,—
 Some call it Evolution,
 And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
 When the moon is new and thin,
 Into our hearts high yearnings
 Come welling and surging in,—

Come from the mystic ocean,
 Whose rim no foot has trod,—
 Some of us call it Longing,
 And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
 The infinite tender sky,
 The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
 And the wild birds sailing high ;
 And all over upland and lowland
 The charm of the golden rod,—
 Some of us call it Autumn,
 And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
 A mother starved for her brood,
 Socrates drinking the hemlock,
 And Jesus on the rood ;
 And millions who, humble and nameless,
 The straight hard pathway trod,—
 Some call it Consecration,
 And others call it God.

A soul struggling up to the sunlight—
 Up from the mire and the clay,
 Fighting through wars and jungles,
 And sometimes learning to pray,—
 And sometimes a king with a scepter,
 And sometimes a slave with a hod—
 Some people call it Karma,
 And others call it God.

Glimmering waters and breakers,
 Far on the horizon's rim,
 White sails and sea-gulls glinting,
 Away till the sight grows dim ;
 And shells spirit-painted with glory,
 Where sea-weeds beckon and nod,—
 Some people call it Ocean,
 And others call it God.

Cathedrals and domes uplifting,
 And spires pointing up to the sun,
 Images, altars and arches,
 Where kneeling and penance are done,—
 From organs, grand anthems are swelling,
 Where the poor and the needy still plod,—
 Some call it Superstition,
 While others call it God.

Earth redeemed and made glorious,
 Lighted by Heaven within ;
 Men and angels brought face to face,
 With never a thought of sin,—
 Lion and Lamb together lie
 In the flowers that sweeten the sod,—
 Some of us call it Brotherhood,
 And others call it God.

W. CAREY.